

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1 is amended to better distinguish over the applied references, and claim 6 is amended for clarification purposed only. No new matter is added. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Office Action's indication that claims 4, 7, 10-18 and 20 contain allowable subject matter. However, for the reasons discussed below, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims 1-20 are allowable.

The Office Action objects to the title. The title is amended to be more descriptive. Thus, it is requested that the objection to the title be withdrawn.

The Office Action objects to the drawings. Fig. 2 is amended for clarification purposes to clearly show that the non-contact type fixing device, e.g. an oven, and the heated rolls are used in the secondary fixing step. Thus, it is requested that the objection to the drawings be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-3, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Schlueter (U.S. Patent No. 5,784,679) in view of Kanbayashi (U.S. Patent No. 5,281,504). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Allowable claims 4 and 10 are amended into independent form to include all of the limitations of independent claim 1. Thus, claims 4 and 10 are in a condition for allowance. Claims 5-9 and 11-20 depend from allowable independent claims 4 and 10. Thus, claims 5-9 and 11-20 are also in a condition for allowance.

Moreover, neither Schlueter or Kanbayashi, either alone or in combination, disclose or suggest an image forming method including at least fixing plural toner layers to a surface of a transparent substrate in a primary fixing step, and fixing the primarily fixed plural toner layers

in a secondary fixing step under lower pressure than the primary fixing step, as recited in claim 1.

Schlueter discloses an image drying and fixing apparatus for affixing an image to a copy substrate.

Kanbayashi discloses a laminate film suitable for providing a transparency for an overhead projector is formed by disposing an absorbing layer on a substrate.


In contrast to the claimed invention, neither Schlueter or Kanbayashi, either alone or in combination, disclose or suggest fixing the primarily fixed plural toner layers in a secondary fixing step under lower pressure than the primary fixing step. On the contrary, no where are these features disclosed or suggested. Accordingly, any combination of the applied references would not have resulted in a device that reduces the generation of air bubbles in the toner layers during the fixing process so that blisters and voids will not be produced.

Because it would not have been obvious to combine the applied references to arrive at the claimed invention, it is respectfully requested that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-20 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Richard S. Elias
Registration No. 48,806

JAO:RSE/eks

Attachment:
Replacement Sheet

Date: September 22, 2004

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

<p>DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE AUTHORIZATION Please grant any extension necessary for entry; Charge any fee due to our Deposit Account No. 15-0461</p>

Amendments to the Drawings:

Fig. 2 is amended for clarification purposes to clearly show that the non-contact type fixing device and the heated rolls are used in the secondary fixing step.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet